# The PULPIT

*A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching*

JANUARY 1947


## The Ebb Tide

By WILLIAM H. HUDNUT, SR.

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By JAMES BLAIR MILLER


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# Sermon Illustrations

*Contributed by Readers o*
**THE PULPIT**

### An Emperor on the Bible

It is reported that Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia recently gave his testimony on the worth of the Bible: "Today man sees all his hopes and aspirations crumbling before him. He is perplexed and knows not whither he is drifting. But he must realize that the Bible is his refuge and the rallying point for all humanity. In it man will find the solution of his present difficulties and guidance for his future actions, and unless he accepts with clear conscience the Bible and its great message, he cannot hope for salvation. For my part, I glory in the Bible."—*William C. Donald II, First Congregational Church, Oconomowoc, Wis.*

### Retreating from Life

Near a little mountain village in the state of New Hampshire there stands an ancient house. Through the years its outer rooms have decayed, rotted, slowly crumbled away. As this process of disintegration was going on, the family kept retreating to the inner rooms, dragging bits of furniture with them. Today, with the children all married and gone, the aged man and his wife are living in *one* room in the *middle* of the house. All around them are the outer rooms with walls sagging, windows broken, the roof fallen in. Pieces of old dilapidated furniture which could not be got into the one room were left behind, and can be seen today through holes in the walls and through the glassless, gaping windows of the outer rooms.

That is a parable of the manner in which many people meet life today. They just sit in the middle of it and hug themselves. They try to ignore life while it goes to pieces around them. They neglect to repair it with good will or to reinforce it with dedication or to reroof it with service or to install new windows of faith in it. With great causes to be espoused, they sit on the old furniture and nurse their complaints. With half the world bleeding and needy, they gather up their skirts and retreat into the inner room, seeking comfort. With some of the most momentous days in history to be faced, they put on their blinkers and pass by on the other side of life. With multitudes of homeless wandering people in the world dying of hunger and exposure, they want to know why they cannot get a thirty per cent wage increase. With handles waiting for hands to take hold and lift, with wheels immobilized for the lack of shoulders to be put to them, with walls to be erected, with windows to be installed, with leaky roofs needing repairs, they sit in one room of life and complacently look out through the rents.—*Robert C. Yarbrough, Second Church in Newton, West Newton, Mass.*

### Christianity Has the Key

Eugene O'Neill is America's most celebrated playright. Recently one of his plays opened on Broadway. Shortly before the premier, Mr. O'Neill consented to a mass interview. The reporters expected more of the earthy realism which his dramas usually depict. But he surprised them. Stating the core of his philosophy, he declared: "If the human race is so stupid that in 2,000 years it hasn't had brains enough to appreciate that the secret of happiness is contained in one simple sentence which you'd think any school kid could understand and apply, then it's time we dumped it down the nearest drain and let the ants have a chance. That simple sentence is: 'For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his soul.' "—*Don E. Smucker, Princeton Theological Seminary.*

### Bibles Yesterday and Today

In the 14th century, for the privilege of reading a Bible just one day, a load of hay would be exchanged. In England, in the 16th century, Bibles were so scarce and so valuable that they were chained to pillars and pulpits of the churches. Today, because of modern printing and distribution methods, the American Bible Society has made it possible for almost every man, woman and child to own a Bible.

### He Gave It His Best

A story heard long ago tells of an Italian stonecutter who had emigrated to this country and had found a job in New York city. The foreman took him to a large block of marble and handing him the design that was to be cut in the stone, left him at his task. The Italian was an excellent craftsman and soon the arresting design of a pastoral scene began to appear on the marble. When the work was finished the foreman inspected it, passed on it favorably, and assigned the Italian another piece of
Before this was finished a half-
was given the workmen an
Italian set out to see someth
New York. A building in proc
construction caught his eye. He
closer. What was that over the
way? It looked familiar. Why,
his own work, the first piece
carved in his new position. A
of satisfaction warmed his hea
turned away, then came back,
he looked on his handiwork
claimed: "I am glad I gave
very best, my very best."—*Edg
Witt Jones, Central Woo
Christian Church, Detroit, Mic*

### Two Points of View

A scientist described man as
lumps of unique carbon and
of complicated structure." N
here to help a man step
But here is the unknown
"Now are we the sons of
and it doth not yet appear wh
shall be." Who, hearing so
blow such a trumpet of belief,
not step out into the week, ho
the difficulties, and meet it with
and courage?

There are those who say th
erything taking place here is
minor incident on a minor
which some day will be a ball
(Some say it will end in great
but no matter.) But hear Paul'
laration: "For I reckon that th
ferings of this present time ar
worthy to be compared with the
which shall be revealed in us."
thing of this faith was voice
Charles Beard, when he
"Something magnificent is taking
here." Well, after that, can
step a little higher, with faith
hope and great expectation!—*H.
ard Rasmussen, University C
(Presbyterian), West Lafayette*

### The Church's True Task

Here is a story which tells
thing of John Wesley's concepti
the church's mission. An Anglica
tor, at the prompting of som
his disgruntled parishioners, pro
that "the noise emanating from a
leyan meetinghouse sounded like
men putting up a building," w
upon Wesley replied: "Not bui
but blasting out lively stones."—
*S. Buffat, First Presbyterian Ch
Centralia, Ill.*

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# The Pulpit

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

IE XVIII CHICAGO, JANUARY, 1947 NUMBER 1

# It Is Hard to Be A Christian

By ROBERT JAMES McCRACKEN

*r ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate oad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and here be which go in thereat. Because strait is e and narrow is the way which leadeth unto d few there be that find it. Matthew 7:13-14.*

'HE LIGHT of such an injunction no one need gest that Jesus got his disciples on false pre- He painted no glowing picture. He told people what they would be in for if they elected to r him. He made them count the cost at the start. With a love of reality that would brook no evasion, he first faced the facts for himself and then insisted that candidates for discipleship should do the same.

There are in the main two ways by which to secure the support and allegiance of men. You may bribe them or you may challenge them. You may appeal to the selfish instinct in the heart of every man or you may appeal to the heroic instinct; e nature of the appeal will do much to deter- ne quality of the response. Bribe, and you will service, eye-service, time-service and, when the breaks, many a defaulter. Challenge, and at ou sift the wheat from the chaff. Challenge, ose who respond will proffer the utmost love valty of their hearts. Jesus, who knew what man, knew that. With him it was never a ut always and everywhere a challenge.

### *DISCIPLESHIP NO PASTIME*

is what we find here. There is nothing in ssage to indicate that the way to heaven is ou are making a colossal mistake if you think n saunter along it with your hands in your . Christian discipleship is not—what great s of people suppose it to be—a sort of pastime one happens to be keen about, just as others en about games or music or literature, some- hat can be taken up and set down at will or ng to inclination. "You will not yawn yourself aven with an idle wish," said Richard Cecil. Samuel Rutherford put it, "You will not be there lying at ease upon a feather bed." I know, and you know, where those men learned that language. It was from the lips of him who said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

How little that note is sounded today! There is an impression abroad that religion first and last is a comforting and comfortable affair, a device to preserve the status quo and to create patience and passivity in the midst of conditions as they are. Not infrequently one hears it said that Christianity is so much "dope," that Christians use their faith in God as a couch on which to recline, that they have taken the crosses out of their churches and put in cushions instead. Dean Inge proposed a new last line for the verse of a very familiar hymn, so well did he think it describes the average twentieth century Christian:

> They climbed the steep ascent of heaven
> Through peril, toil and pain;
> O God, to us may grace be given
> To travel by the train.

### *RELIGION WITHOUT A 'KICK'*

We laugh at that, but I wonder whether we can afford to, or whether we have any moral right so to do. Are we not laughing at ourselves? One thing is beyond dispute. Twentieth century Christianity, by and large, has lost the stringent note. For most of us there is no cross in it, no abstinence, no self-denial, no subjugation of the flesh in the interests of the spirit. I put it to you that the common notion is that a Christian is a person who goes to church on an average of once a week, and tries in a mild and quiet way to live a decent life. I put it to you that young people, when they look at the church and its program, are not made to feel that Christianity is a creed for heroes or that to embrace it means, in Nietzsche's phrase, "living dangerously."

If I may use a slang phrase to make my meaning sharp and clear, I would say that religion in these days has very little "kick" in it. It scarcely gives any offense. As a rule, it is much too timid to make its influence felt outside its own immediate sphere. On most public occasions it shows itself overanxious to placate and accommodate the state and the world at large. It is not organized as a fighting force in national and international life, nor is it attacking with highhearted confidence in its own superior powers the battalions of evil. The drink trade can flourish right under its eye. So can the armaments industry. So can all kinds of injustice and oppression. The man on the street has little reason to think that Christianity is a straining and strenuous enterprise, or that

Christians are a company of people committed to the turning of the world upside down with a view to setting it right side up.

### *A CREED FOR HEROES*

But that was the general impression of Christianity and of Christians in the first century. It meant something then to be a Christian, and it cost something. No one from A. D. 30 to A. D. 313 thought of Christianity as a comfortable religion or of dismissing it as so much "dope." In the general mind, it was associated with effort and enterprise, with persecution and tribulation. It was a creed for heroes; it put men on their mettle; it tested all their powers of endurance. It set them hard tasks, confronted them with perplexing problems, matched them against apparently superior odds. The first Christians, however, were persuaded that their faith was absolutely indispensable to the welfare and salvation of mankind. It was something to live for, to fight for, and if need be, to die for. Its enemy was not a power to be circumvented, outwitted or ignored, but a power to be ceaselessly and relentlessly attacked, and attacked right out in the open.

In a book which he wrote some years ago Dr. Foakes Jackson drew attention to this feature of the life of the early church. Civil life in those days, he says, was comparatively secure and tranquil; those who wanted quietness and safety could have it; but there was one danger spot—the Christian church. Join that and you took the risk of being thrown to the lions. To that circumstance, thinks Dr. Jackson, may be traced in no small measure the phenomenal growth of the church in those centuries. It became a center of attraction for heroic souls, and as such conquered the world of that day.

### *A CHALLENGE TO LIVE DANGEROUSLY*

It should never have ceased to be that. What the armed services have been in recent years for countless young men and women, the church, the army of the living God, should be in every generation. Some time ago, a well-known surgeon in Britain, discussing the whole problem of work and wages, had this to say: "What is happening today is that nobody works for the sake of getting the thing done. The result of the work is a by-product; the aim of the work is to make money to do something else. Doctors practice medicine, not primarily to relieve suffering, but to make a living—the cure of the patient is something that happens on the way. Lawyers accept briefs, not because they have a passion for justice, but because the law is the profession which enables them to live. The reason," he added, "why men often find themselves happy and satisfied in the army is that for the first time in their lives they find themselves doing something, not for the sake of the pay, which is miserable, but for the sake of getting the thing done."

In itself that is an interesting judgment. I should like, amending the last sentence, to make it read thus: The reason why men often found themselves happy and satisfied in the church of the first century was because for the first time in their lives they found themselves doing something, not for the sake pay, which if you are thinking in terms of rewards was scandalous, but for the sake of a great task done. When the church becomes again, when its strategies are less timid and typed and more venturesome and courageous, its social conscience is keener, when church ship costs something, not only in cash but in and labor and, possibly, in reputation, it will again become a center of attraction for heroic

Of late, across the Atlantic, it had become There is the story told about the wife of a Norwegian pastor who was permitted to visit Berggrav on his birthday, he being at the time concentration camp. Into his captivity she sm a cake of her own baking, on which she had ins the words: *Ecclesia Militans, Ecclesia Triumph* A militant Church is a triumphant Church. If w forgotten it, the war served to remind us that is something in human nature which responds challenge to live adventurously and dangerously

### *TWO SIDES TO JESUS' MINISTRY*

I have been insisting that twentieth century tianity, by and large, has lost the stringent note. is this? Is it not because it has lost the note of stri in the person and teaching of Jesus? Great numb people think of the Master as a meek and gentl who went about everywhere breathing mild be tions, yet that comes near to being a caricature the facts of the case. There were two sides ministry of Jesus. On the one hand, he went doing good—healing the sick, giving sight to the relieving those who were in mental distress. C other hand, he went about giving the most offense to all sorts of folk—his relatives, the dis the scribes and the Pharisees, the people with interests like the money-changers in the temple. H so outspoken and inflammatory in his language, compromising and unconventional in his behavio he was excommunicated, stoned, hunted from pl place in Palestine, and finally nailed to a gib Public Enemy Number One. He said once that come to cast fire on the earth. He said on a occasion that he brought not peace but a swor one can read the Gospels and not perceive how se he was to the fact that men were likely to be of by him and his message. "Blessed is he whosoeve not be offended in Me," was the word he sent to the Baptist as he lay in prison, baffled and bewi by the line Jesus was taking; while to his disci said, as he faced his greatest ordeal, "All ye sh offended because of Me this night." Read the G and if you have never noticed the fact before, surprise you to discover how often and how Jesus gave offense.

### *THE STERNNESS OF JESUS*

But, someone may say, What was there about to give offense? Of all characters is not his the winsome and gracious? True, but dare you ov the sterner elements in his character and message stringent he was, for example, in the matter

disciples! He never made it easy for a man to follower. "Strait is the gate"—that was what he 'Lord," cried one man, "I will follow Thee ersoever Thou goest." It was an enthusiastic and another type of leader would have closed at once; but not Jesus. He knew that enthusiasm ething fitful and shallow, which accounts for ering reply: "Foxes have holes, the birds of the ve their nests, but the Son of Man hath not to lay his head." "Lord," cried another man om had been addressed the call to discipleship, l follow Thee, but suffer me first to go and ny father." And swift as a rapier thrust came sponse, "Let the dead bury their dead, but go nd preach the Kingdom of God." "Lord," cried nother candidate for discipleship, "I will follow but let me first go bid them farewell which are ie at my house." It was for all the world like a king for embarkation leave, yet to that man Jesus sed one of the sternest words the world has eard: "No man having put his hand to the , and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of

### *JESUS AND NICODEMUS*

re was the case, too, of Nicodemus—intrigued is, coming to him under cover of darkness, mak- autious, tentative, you might almost say patron- approach: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a come from God, for no man can do the miracles thou doest except God be with him." And Jesus in on what was promising to be a pretty little with a sledgehammer sentence, out of all ap- relation to what Nicodemus had been saying: , verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born ie cannot see the Kingdom of God." And when mus, completely taken aback, mumbles and s and stumbles, Jesus as it were completes his ow: "Art thou a master in Israel and under- t not these things?" How this Man among men ged men, dared them, made life stern and de- ig and awesome! He would have no headlong ers, no impulsive converts. It was not that he did nt disciples; it was rather that he wanted de- le, expendable disciples.

### *TODAY'S ZEAL FOR NUMBERS*

ie church nowadays we are so pathetically anx- out numbers. Can he draw a crowd? is almost t question pulpit committees ask. Can he fill the on plates? is commonly enough the second. Jesus xious not about quantity but about quality. That his winnowing fan was in such constant use. He s that the big battalions would never be found ling before the strait gate or crowding on to the way. "Few there be that find it," was what he t is an easy matter in these days to become a r of the company of Christ. Indicate the slight- ire in that direction and a minister is on your p and at your service, arranging for a com- e pew and a friendly reception and, of course, freewill offering envelopes. In the Galilean days it was a terrible thing to be a member of the company of Christ. It meant the stait gate, the narrow way, the denial of self, the shouldering of a cross. "Are you able," said Christ to the handful of men round about him, for the crowds had gone, "to drink the cup that I drink of?" Are *we* able?

Consider one other matter. How stringent Jesus was in his moral standards! The marriage bond is indissoluble; fornication is not even to be thought of; covetousness is idolatry. We are to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us and to pray for those who despitefully use and persecute us. It is the inwardness of the ethic of Jesus that is the really exacting thing about it. Other moral teachers condemn the sinful act—he goes deeper and condemns the motive that prompts the act. The Commandments, he says, are broken in thought before the sinner proceeds to the act, and the sin remains, even if no open offense is committed. It is so characteristic of Jesus to attack the disease when others are tinkering with the symptoms. So he rebukes acquisitiveness rather than wealth and gets the poor man as well as the rich one. He rebukes hatred rather than war and gets the pacifist as well as the non-pacifist. He rebukes lust rather than adultery and gets the respectable churchgoer as well as the woman of the streets. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of olden time, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." Wherefore, "if thy right eye offend thee, out with it; if thy right hand offend thee, off with it; it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." We have heard those words so often that they have well-nigh lost their edge and meaning; those who heard them for the first time were aghast at their severity.

### *WHY JESUS IS REJECTED*

Here without doubt is one reason why Jesus gives offense to many today. It has to be remembered that while some people reject Christ because they cannot understand him, others reject him because they understand him only too well. They know that his demands are stringent and exacting, that they involve a cleaning up of the inner life, the substitution of self-denial for self-interest, the subordination of the material to the spiritual, and they are not prepared to toe the line or pay the price. They prefer the wide to the strait gate and the broad to the narrow way.

"Madam," wrote Samuel Rutherford to Lady Kenmure, "I persuade you that the greatest part but play with Christianity; they put it byhand easily. I thought it had been an easy thing to be a Christian, and that to seek God had been at the next door; but oh, the windings, the turnings, the ups and downs that he hath led me through, and I see yet much way to the ford." That is the authentic note. No one has ever entered into the Kingdom of Heaven without tribulation; not perhaps the tribulation of fire and persecution, but the tribulation of a humble and contrite heart, of the flesh subjugated in the interest of the spirit, of a life poured

forth like spilt wine in the service of others. If our religion is of such a pliable and elastic sort that it has cost us no pains to acquire, no self-denial to preserve, no effort to advance, no struggle to maintain holy and undefiled, whatever else it is, it is not the religion of him who said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

# A Faith for Dark Days

**By ALEXANDER E. SHARP**

*The light is still shining in the darkness, for the darkness has never put it out. John 1:5.*

WE HAVE BEEN warned by Reinhold Niebuhr that a sagging faith may become our most serious liability. He says: "We are a generation that must have the spiritual resources to deal with the problem of frustration." Recently a stranger said to me: "When I read the newpapers and listen to the radio today, I find it hard to believe firmly in anything good. There seems to be nothing but misery ahead." Both Dr. Niebuhr and this passing acquaintance of mine were diagnosing accurately our major spiritual problem today, that of facing the temptation to despair.

It is not difficult to understand why we are tempted to flounder around in disillusionment and despair. Moral and spiritual shadows enshroud our past, present and future. Behind us are the shades of Rotterdam, Lidice, Buchenwald and Hiroshima, occasions which revealed man, who was announced as "little lower than the angels," as capable of behaving but little better than the higher brutes. The present is saturated with the dark clouds of new rivalries, power politics and moral droop, and a buoyant optimism for tomorrow is precluded when we are told that discerning European diplomats are working on the hypothesis that a new conflict is inevitable, or when we see a business forecasting service declaring: "War will come in five, ten or fifteen years. Take your choice, but prepare for it." We wonder "what price peace," if this is all we have learned from the tutoring of the past six years.

### *FAITH, THE HEARTBEAT OF LIFE*

These are some reasons it is time for us as Christians to find a faith for dark days. If faith were just an adornment, something that could be worn or discarded without loss or disaster, we could ignore our temptation to despair. But faith is of the essence of robust living, being the heartbeat of our choicest hopes and most cherished values. Possessed of faith, we throb with strenuous living, surcharged with a sense of high destiny and noble effort; bereft of faith, we become children of the moment, without impelling purpo desire. To lose faith is to compromise with life selling short one's own goal. It is bowing Go It is silent surrender to the powers of darkness this loss of faith is our most persistent temptation The Christian must live above such despair and less living. He must have and hold a faith, fo through these dark days. But can he?

The answer is that others have found it po Aristocrats of spirit never have surrendered thei tc the ghosts that stalk at night. Tennyson suff spiritual blackout when he lost his beloved s friend, Arthur Hallam, but through the ago blackness of dejection he saw a ray of light; not but enough:

> We have but faith: we cannot know;
> For knowledge is of things we see;
> And yet we trust it comes from Thee,
> A beam in darkness, let it grow.

### *FAITH GREATER THAN DARKNESS*

Another spiritual aristocrat depicted with his the same truth that faith can be greater than the ness that would eclipse it. George Frederick painted a dejected figure sitting atop the world back is bent as though every muscle has capitula circumstance; her head is bowed as though th would see no more sorrow. Clutched tightly breast is the lyre which had recently mellowe with harmony and sweet melody, but now the that had brought lilt and joy are broken. As one at this stricken figure, cowering over the broke in the twilight, he wonders, with G. K. Ches why the picture was not called "Despair" inst "Hope." But when he finally perceives the focal of the painting, that one string still remains unsn he knows, as Mr. Chesterton points out, that in the presence of a great truth . . . somethi vast for any eye to see and too secret for any r to utter. He knows that there is something i which is always apparently on the eve of disapp but never disappears. . . . He knows a great fact . . . that faith is always a perpetually de thing which survives all its conquerors."

And if still we wonder whether it is possible in faith above the temptation to despair, we remember that the Christian faith itself was b dark days, when the writer of John was forced claim: "The light is still shining in the darkne the darkness has never put it out."

The Christian has always had a faith for dark a string unsnapped, a beam of faith through the What is our faith for these dark days?

### *STILL GOD'S WORLD!*

Consider, first, that this is no time for final because, whatever happens and however we look this still is God's world. This is a significant that our modern calamity howlers ignore whe assert that evil is in the saddle riding to its own and ours. Without minimizing the tragedy an of the present, I find myself nonetheless warml

with remarks made by a friend. He said: "I
papers and listen to the radio. I am supposed to
t in a cold sweat. I hear the atomic bomb is
explode the planet. I am not supposed to be
leep at night. But I do not break out in a
at, and I do sleep at night, because I believe
hty God."
s the Christian answer to today's forebodings:
is God's world. Deep within, there is still a
urpose that will work itself out; a grim justice
assert itself when men become too unruly; a
goodness that will not be pushed off balance:
-off divine event toward which the whole crea-
es."
ot misinterpret me. I am not disparaging the
f warning so timely for today's naughty chil-
he prophets of doom are God-inspired, for the
nd future are filled with perils that leave our
attering. A bad slip and there will be un-
tedly bad consequences. Dr. Einstein, who
the atomic formula, is just as truly a genius
says, "It is too late to make mistakes."

### *A LAYMAN'S FAITH*

f it is too late to make mistakes, equally it is
to yield to final despair. If we need the proph-
oom today, we need, too, the prophets of faith
e. Listen to these courageous, reassuring words
Charles Wonacott, a Christian layman, who
ks to these dark days:

v what of the future? I am one who simply can-
come a pessimist. . . . There has never been a
v era a-borning than this atomic age. We should
that civilization has marched hand-in-hand with
scovery and utilization of physical power. The
an with his two fists wrenched from nature his
rd of living. This improved when he discovered
club extended the power of his biceps. . . . In
nan learned how to harness the power of the
and then steam, the waterfall, mysterious electric
, oil, and gases from dead sea life—and through-
all civilization leaped forward.
v we are peering into the mysteries of God's
realm and civilization will be further advanced.
will be the quality of this new civilization? It
ls upon still another power, the power of the
It is the energy of the soul, greater than atomic
, or time, or space. It is God's Holy Spirit,
ng in the lives of men.

earnest confession of faith by a layman is the
nich we can hold, that the powers men unleash
inventive genius can be directed by the divine
or the welfare of humanity. This still is God's
And listen to Studdert Kennedy:

How is it proved?
t isn't proved, you fool. It can't be proved.
How can you prove a victory before
t's won? How can you prove a man who leads
To be a leader worth the following
Unless you follow to the death? . . .
Well, God's my leader, and I hold that he
s good and strong enough to work his plan
nd purpose out to its appointed end.

### *ULTIMATE GOOD FROM EVIL*

Again, this is no time for final despair, because in the providence of God a present evil often serves an ultimate good. The present is discouraging, but we are in no position to pass judgment upon it now. That must await history's final evidence. Perhaps then we shall see that "the sufferings of the present time" will not have been worthy to be compared with the glory later revealed. This will not be surprising in a world where human life itself is born in travail.

The testimony of those who have seen trouble transmuted into final good is loud and clear. "Of every step I took in pain I had some gain," says Ann Wickham. Jean Ingelow testifies, "Tears are the showers that fertilize the world." Christ endured the cross for the joy that was set before him.

Charles A. Beard, who perhaps has looked at the sermons of history as intently as any living person, believes in what he calls the "calamity theory of progress." On the basis of historical evidence, he says, our progress springs from tragedy and catastrophe. A commentator expands this theory: "We don't get an international iceberg reporting system until a Titanic sinks. We don't get social security until a national economic depression creates wholesale unemployment. We don't get a United Nations until we have two world wars. If this theory is correct, then the psychological tailspin that peace has thrown us into should be hailed with bunting and a sixty-piece band. Deeper and darker impressions may be what our spirits need."

I doubt whether any of us are inclined to bring out the bunting to express our joy at the passing parade of woe our generation is experiencing. But neither ought we to put on crepe and sackcloth just because there is trouble at hand. This same trouble may be the labor pains of a greater future.

### *SIGNIFICANT GAINS MADE*

Even today there is some evidence that there is progress emerging from our trials. The United Nations is not doing too well, but compared to the wave of isolationism that swept the country after the last war and left the League of Nations a foundling, it is a healthy infant. Today, a short quarter-century later, there is scarcely a reputable thinker who will expouse a philosophy of isolationism. That is gain.

Again, despite disillusioning failures, we have a hint of advances in matters relating to race. Certain minority groups are vocally more insistent upon their rights, which is evidence at the same time of increased tolerance by the majorities.

We also may be forging ahead, at least temporarily, in spiritual consciousness. For years the trend was toward an exclusive worship of things. Then we produced a Frankensteinian *thing* that threatened to destroy us. We began to talk about "spiritual poverty" until a group of midwestern scientists called in some ministers of religion, explaining that they had raised physical power to near *n*-th degree and needed increased spiritual resources among men to ward off disaster. Compare this attitude of science toward religion with some attitudes prevalent in the first quarter of this century.

Massed, these separate experiences indicate that our present predicament, as bad as it is, is not one to justify absolute despair unless we close our eyes to part of the evidence. "Defeat may serve as well as victory, to shake the soul and let the glory out," sings Edwin Markham. And Leslie Weatherhead says: "It is a poor faith that believes that evil can do terrifying things to us and that all God can do is help us bear them bravely. God can use evil for our final good as powerfully as he can use good."

### *CHRIST—THE WAY OUT*

Consider, finally, that this is no time for final despair, because we have in Christ the secret and power of our own salvation. We have been grappling with the temptation to despair. But the only occasions for true despair, the only hopeless situations, are those which have no exits, or where the way out cannot be discovered.

We are not in that kind of predicament. We have knowledge of a way out of our bad situation which should be the vital restorative for our limp spirits. The man in the street knows the way out of our present troubles. A lawyer recently remarked to one of his clients: "I never saw the world in such condition. I don't know what's wrong." His client, a business man, replied: "O, yes, you do. You know what's wrong. We have forgotten the teachings of the lowly Nazarene, that's all." "I think you are right," said the lawyer thoughtfully.

The President, too, knows the way. He has said: "Religion alone has the answer for humanity's twentieth century cry of despair, 'What must I do to be saved?' In this time of grave anxiety, the voice of science unites with the voice of religion to affirm that the words of Jesus . . . are not only the words of Christian idealism, but also the command of democratic realism."

And no one will take issue with Dr. Fosdick when he comments: "The conviction rises in many, and the suspicion in many more that, as another put it, there is no way out of the world's misery but the way which would have been found by Christ's will if he had undertaken the work of a modern practical statesman."

Thus the issue is drawn. Humanity is in trouble. We lift praying hands for a salvation that does not come. We feel like a prisoner about to face the firing squad of the ages. Our hearts are broken, our hopes waning, our morals drooping, our neighbors treacherous, and our science has backfired. Why not give up? Why not? Because there is knowledge and power enough with Christ to save us from our troubles when we are willing to go his way.

### *CHRIST'S WAY NOT DISCREDITED*

Our spiritual struggle to counter despair and ward off total disillusionment, and the secret of victory in that struggle, is vividly portrayed in the spiritual experience of a New York minister who visited London in the early days of the "blitz." One Sunday morning, surrounded by evidences of destruction and suffering, he stood at the Marble Arch corner in Hyde Park. He heard an atheist shout: "Two world wars in a single generation have finally discredited Chri Christianity." People around the speaker mu assent. A wave of dejection, the temptation to d surged over the minister. With shuffling feet h dered aimlessly through Hyde Park and into Park. The speaker's boast tormented him. C be, he asked himself, that the atheist was right wrong? Was his Christian faith a mirage, h beautiful? Would people no longer believe? Had been discredited?

Discredited? Suddenly, the minister tells us, a tion as from heaven flashed upon him. He fe shouting. His despair yielded to confidence. He once more at the sandbags and rubble, but thei sage was different now. He was saying to himsel to the atheist): "So you say two world wars generation have finally discredited Christ and tianity? Two world wars have only corrob Christ and Christianity, for was it not Christ who said "Therefore whosoever heareth these of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. A rain descended, and the floods came, and the blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and was the fall thereof.' "

There was the answer: Christ's way or none. in the midst of suffering and destruction, and t them, was faith regained.

So it must be with us today. The stranger and hold Niebuhr were right. It is hard to believe But we *must*—to live. And we can! It is no ti final despair because it still is God's world; bec God's providence evil can be used for final goo because we have knowledge and power enoug Christ to save us from our troubles when we ar ing to go his way. This is our faith for dark da

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KEEP DREAMING of a world of enduring pea moral righteousness; dream of government f upon the will of the governed, of economic tunity for all peoples, of individuals seen and as ends and not means. . . . There is a diff between a makeshift point of view which merely what is expedient and the other point of view accepts the present realities while its adherent on to the goal. We need a conviction living heart of us that will cause us to move out enterprise of justice for all. The Golden Rule basis for our hopes here. The dream of enduring and human relationships which are right will true because we cannot live without it.

HAZEN G. WER

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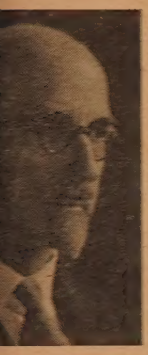
THE WORLD cannot be saved by three men or hundred men around peace tables. Their work but not enough. The crux of the problem is n power to frighten suffering men into submissio the power to heal their misery. This is the way good Samaritan, the way of Jesus, and it is th way out. FRANK C. LAUBA

# The Ebb Tide

By WILLIAM H. HUDNUT, SR.

*he more attention . . . lest we drift away.—
2:1.*

WORLD is caught in an ebb tide. Powerful
ents are sucking us away from our moorings.
drifting toward possible destruction. There
rited and acquired priceless values which we
anger of losing.



This ebb tide has been gathering in volume and force ever since our enemies surrendered. In it swirl many currents—insidious, subversive, atheistic. The current threat lies against spiritual values more precious even than those to preserve which we have spent uncounted billions of treasure and sacrificed unnumbered millions of lives. Today you may not realize the drift—"such a tide as moving, seems asleep"—and to-
the values may be gone. We may possess them
t are we going to keep them to hand on to our
?
are values which we do not intend to lose.
slightest threat to these calls forth our utmost
e effort. Not long ago there was a financial
Wall Street, and all over the country our
nt seismographs had the jitters. All our ticker-
dicts were greatly disturbed. Was this the
g of a depression? Was this the time to sell
going down and buy what's going up? But
going up? Aye, there's the rub. I too felt
urbation, holding a diminishing hoard of com-
security, preferred anxiety and government
. I do not refer to this profound interest in
stments, this determination not to lose our
as in any way reprehensible, but only to con-
r awareness and concern over the threatened
material values with our failure to recognize
measures against the drift away from hold-
nfinitely greater worth.

### *A WORLD WITHOUT LOVE*

re drifting away from love. Even family love
nperiled as our cocktail stimulation strains
estic fabric and our divorce percentages pyra-
ut our greater danger lies in a wider area
Jesus, overthrowing all barriers, proclaimed
e the law of mankind, "Love your neighbor
elf," and instituted the order of the Good
n. This is Christian love—brothers of the
f God, comrades of the nations and the races.
ents are understanding, justice, compassion,
—to put human values above all other values
cast Christ's seamless robe over all the out-
d the aliens.

Christian love is the very essence of democracy, and when it is gone we will have nothing to offer mankind but a shard, empty of all appeal and reconstructing power. We too have been bloated with the virus of national superiority and have looked down upon other breeds and cultures. Over eighty years have passed since Lincoln signed his Emancipation Proclamation, and still the Negro is denied most of the finest fruits of our democracy. We are all appalled by the slaughter of millions of European Jews, but are not moved with righteous indignation that he still remains a pariah in our social life. Men and women of the highest intelligence and repute have surveyed the accumulated miseries of mankind in Europe and Asia and have reported that only our bounty will save millions from starvation and spiritual despair, and yet our benevolence stands uncommitted upon the threshold of our luxury.

### *HATE REIGNS, FAITH GOES*

Hot winds of hate are blowing their searing breath across the world and our enemies in war are still our enemies in peace. After our country had become involved in the First World War, and the sinking of the Lusitania and subsequent propaganda had filled us with hatred of the Hun, I was one of a group of men who were sent to Washington to gather information about the needs of the various departments of the government, and afterwards broadcast this information at meetings to be arranged. After hearing the heads of the different administrative departments, we were received by President Wilson at the White House. The President addressed us briefly. We were all profoundly affected by a simple story with which he illustrated his plea against our growing hatred. Charles Lamb and a friend were speaking of a man whom Charles did not know personally. "I hate him!" Charles exclaimed. His friend was astonished at such an outburst from such a mild, friendly person. "Why, you do not know him. How can you say you hate him?" "I do not want to know him," he replied; "if I knew him, I could not hate him. Russian, German, Japanese, Jew, Negro—if I really knew him, I could not hate him."

One of our most reliable correspondents, reporting from Paris the proceedings of the United Nations Council, said that there appeared to be among the representatives no faith in the future. In this they represent us truly—we are losing faith, faith in men as in the future. Humanism has had its day and we no longer sing, "Glory to God in the Highest." And this, partly because man has failed us and has revealed his depths of depravity and his inability to understand or to control the terrible complexities of our current world organization.

It is an ancient aphorism that everything we do not understand is horrible and our widespread horror of the atomic bomb is, in part at least, due to our inability to understand nuclear physics. The advent of the atomic age has filled the world with fear. Science has released a Frankenstein and civilization lies under the threat of another Hiroshima.

There has been a wide acceptance of the belief that science is our savior, and yet science has no moral implications. The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking at the opening meeting of the Bicentennial Celebration at Princeton, censured those who believe that whatever science can do it has a sovereign right to do, and that by the unlimited application of scientific power all the human problems can be solved and all the human needs be met. "It is clear," he said, "that the use of scientific knowledge must be governed by something other than its own possibilities. What *ought* man to do is of more far-reaching importance than what he *can* do."

### *OVERSIMPLIFIED OPTIMISM*

We are growing fears and losing faith. Every headline in the news is phrased as a portent. We are becoming hardened to the prophecy of a third world war. Even the Christian conference meeting in Cambridge, England, in August envisioned the possibility of a "world catastrophe on an unimaginable scale." Are the optimists extinct? Has hoping against hope gone out of fashion? Is the future only threatening and portentous?

What about God! We used to sing with childish Pippa, "God's in his heaven, all's well with the world." We believed progress to be inevitable, if not antomatic. As a boy I learned from my Reader to recite:

> There's a good time coming, boys,
> There's a good time coming.
> We may not live to see the day,
> But earth will glory in the ray
> Of the good time coming.

I wish that here and now I might recite those lines with the same carefree spirit. Perhaps this oversimplified optimism was a throw-back to a once hotly contended faith that the world society would grow better and better to usher in the millennium when Christ would come again. Perhaps we have failed to write over against this optimism the historically accredited faith that your sins will find you out, that when you sow the wind you reap the whirlwind. Maybe we are being punished. Maybe this also is progress.

### *IS GOD THERE?*

As a matter of fact, our loss of faith in the future is a loss of faith in God. Formerly with Lowell we saw God standing in the shadow, "keeping watch above his own." Now—still the shadow, the mystery, the unknowable future—but is God there? Why does he not rend the heavens and come down when his children are playing at annihilation with their newly invented fireworks? If our faith falters in this testing hour, the alternative is not an absentee God or a limited God, but faith as a grain of mustard seed. Ours to challenge this fateful future with the cry of the prophet Zechariah, "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain."

We believe in a personal God, but is it a personal faith, built up through our own experience? Is he just God, or is he *my God?* Mine through communion, love, submission and service. The men wh secular world has not turned upside down, have turned the world upside down, are the are saying, "Thou art *my God,* I will have gods before thee." A man cannot today ha in the future unless he has a vital and perso in God and can confess with Tennyson:

> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves.

I have been much impressed and much by the report of a survey recently made in B Years ago, when I was a minister in that cit days of Beecher, Talmage, Cuyler and Storrs lyn had a wide and enviable reputation as the Churches. It has lost its crown. The Protest ulation is about half what it was fifty years the report states that the average attendanc churches is 160 if the weather is slightly unfa and concludes with this pitiful statement: "T acteristic Brooklyn church is a meager enterp adapted to the complexities of urban life." I fident that a similar survey would reveal in our cities a like decline in our churches. churches "a meager enterprise," side-stepped Protestant fringe, and neglected by the maj their members—anemic with secularism and in

Dr. Fosdick said recently: "To have a Ma Lord who is easily the dominant figure in and then to have churches, supposed to repres which impress even believers as much too pe small-minded to meet the world's need—that edy! . . . Of all periods in history, this is a greatness in religion."

### *WHAT OF THE CHURCH?*

Are we losing our Protestant church? losing our sense of individual responsibility wishful thinking, if indeed we think about i that someone else will do the job, and that th will be saved by the men and women who care and greatly sacrifice while we sit in the section. If we are ever to have a better world come because you and I and all of us in par with Almighty God does each one his part, a more earnest heed that we do not lose love a the Church of Christ and God himself.

It has taken all the blood and sweat and te Churchill prophesied to save a free world, an take a cross, a dedication and a repentance one of us to gain what we have lost and to what has been ruined. This is no time fo panaceas, for frivolous excuses, for counting t It is your cross to carry, your dedication of w have and what you are; it is your repentan tears for having denied our Lord.

Years ago I saw a picture by a great Frenc Christ crucified stood between the portals of cathedral and on either side came from within ing crowds, unconcerned, each intent upon things; and as I gazed, I seemed to hear searching all Christian hearts—"Is it nothing all you that pass by?"

# God Who Has Gone Before Us

**By E. CROSSLEY HUNTER**

*hou preventest him with blessings. Psalm 21:3.*

HE TRANSLATORS have used this word "prevent" in its earlier and proper meaning. Prevent not originally mean to hinder or obstruct. The later lish word had a simpler meaning—*prevenu,* to go re, or to anticipate; so that the psalmist is saying that God had gone before with his blessings. What a beautiful thought—the prevenient God, who has anticipated all our needs!

No one was more sure than the psalmist that God's blessings had followed him in the past. When he looked back upon life, he could see everywhere the mercy of God. "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life." "This poor man cried and Lord heard him and delivered him from his fears." e Psalms are full of such testimony—God's goodness our yesterdays! A well known minister of our rch, whose life has known much sunshine and not ttle shadow, once told me that the hymn which expressed his own experience was the one containthe beautiful lines:

> With mercy and with judgment
> My web of time he wove,
> And aye the dews of sorrow
> Were lustred by his love.

think that most of us, as we look back over our s, can believe in the guidance of God and see evice of his goodness.

### *A SHEPHERD FOR THE YEARS AHEAD*

Moreover, the psalmist knew that not only had d's goodness followed him in the past, but that the rnal was his present strength and help. In the imliate circumstances the psalmist found God's ever sent help, and he testified: "The Lord is my shepd, I shall not want." God was a very present help in uble. But in our text this morning the psalmist has something still more beautiful. As he faced the rs that awaited him with their uncertainty and r surprise he knew that God had anticipated those eriences and had "prevented" him with blessings. could say with Moses: "The Lord God, he it is goeth before us."

suppose, as we feed the coal into our hungry fures these days, few of us think how long centuries ore man discovered his need for coal God had been work making his forests grow and in the laboratory is world fashioning coal for man's use. We are in midst now of our winter season. The trees are leafless, and the ground is frozen, but before there came the barrenness of the winter God had "prevented" us with the blessing of a harvest. Again, he had prepared in advance for our needs. What a vast heritage awaited us when we were born! A language for our use; institutions to serve our needs of body, mind and soul; organized society to make life rich and safe. In so many ways God has anticipated our needs. When temptation has suddenly swept down upon us, it did not find us unprepared; for there was the example of godly parents and the influence of a Christian home. These were the proof of a prevenient God. When sorrow came there were precious promises waiting for us to prove, friends to comfort, and a hope to sustain.

### *A MOTHER'S LOVE*

But most beautiful of all was the love which awaited us at birth. Some years ago, when I was minister in another city, a young man came to see me. He had been at the service the previous Sunday and brought to me a strange burden of heart. He said he was the victim of a constant and incurable restlessness. "I am afflicted with wanderlust," he said, "I can't live a normal life. I would like to settle down and establish a home and enjoy my work, but there is something strange within me that keeps forever urging me on." He had been in that city only a few weeks, had found employment and friends, would like to have stayed, but again that awful restlessness had possessed him. He had walked over twenty miles the previous day trying to fight it down. I urged him to keep up the fight, and we had prayer together, but I never saw him again.

It was not until years afterward that I read an article by Dr. Thomas Wilson of New York, who, out of a long experience, wrote on the cause and symptoms of wanderlust. Here is a quotation from that article: "To the observing physician there is nothing strange in wanderlust. It is the natural result of the physical and psychological influence to which an unwanted child is subjected. These influences produce in the child a sense of not belonging, not having found its place, its home; and all through life that person will be driven by this sense of homelessness, always unsatisfied, always restless."

Could anything be sadder or more tragic than that? Thank God, it was not true of any of us. There was a mother's love waiting to receive us, which is the nearest thing to God's love that any of us will ever know. Another proof that God had prevented us with his blessing!

### *THE THINGS THAT AWAIT*

Paul, of course, understood this truth and expressed it in that passage: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Be careful, Paul! How little you know now the things that await you! There is shipwreck and stoning and imprisonment and an executioner's block. But Paul is perfectly confident and says,

"Nothing can come in any of my tomorrows that can separate me from God's love."

Some who hear this promise may be drawing near to the sunset of life, and as we face the end of our pilgrimage our text has a beautiful and a wonderful meaning. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil." For in Jesus Christ God has gone before and anticipated our every need. Jesus entered into the mystery and the loneliness of the grave. He tasted death for every man, so that when you and I come to that inevitable hour when we must pass through the portals into that world from which no traveler returns, how wonderful the thought that again God has gone before us, and the same love which prevented us at birth has prevented us at death! "I go to prepare a place for you." And again: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." It is in the very nature of love to make preparation for those whom it loves. Nothing gave father and mother more joy during Christmas week than to prepare for the homecoming of those they love.

### *FACING THE NEW YEAR*

But we are not unmindful this morning that we stand upon the threshold of the New Year. Little does any one of us know what things this year has in store for us. We all cherish our hopes of enduring peace; of the welfare of our dear ones; of life, of health, of happiness. But whether our hopes will be realized God alone knows. One thing however is certain: that God has gone before us, and that that Love which provided a harvest against the winter storms, that Love that awaited us in a mother's heart, the Love that has provided an eternal home when our pilgrimage here is finished—that same Love will provide grace and strength for every experience we may meet.

A soldier from this congregation once put this poem in a letter which he wrote to me:

It's not always easy to get to your feet
When you've suffered some heartbreaking loss;
It's not always easy to stand up erect
When your shoulders are bearing a cross.
But walk bravely on, fall not by the way,
'Neath the burden of doubt and despair,
For God knows the measure of every man's strength
And the weight of the load he can bear.

I do not know who wrote those verses. Perhaps the soldier himself composed them. I suggest that we memorize at least the last two lines:

For God knows the measure of every man's strength
And the weight of the load he can bear.

If there is a load awaiting your heart or mine, we can be assured that there is grace sufficient waiting also. Our text means just that—there is an infinite and everlasting Love that has followed us, and best of all, that awaits us.

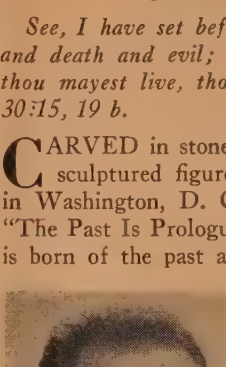
I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life or death
His mercy underlies.

# If Life Is to Be Glorio

**By EDWARD O. CLARK**

*See, I have set before thee this day life and g and death and evil; . . . therefore, choose life, thou mayest live, thou and thy seed." Dueteron 30:15, 19 b.*

CARVED in stone on the base of one of the sculptured figures outside the Archives buil in Washington, D. C., is the significant inscrip "The Past Is Prologue." It is even so, for the pre is born of the past and the future comes out of present when it too has bec the past. Which is to say life is ever before us. No ma how many conclusions life s to have, it is found that e conclusion turns into a mencement.



Something of this kind challenge was in the ap which Moses, speaking on Lord's behalf, made to Is "See," he said, "I have set fore you this day life and g and death and evil . . . choo He was saying to them: "Life is before you, mak it what you will. You may make it good by your f fulness, or evil by your treachery; you may make noble with worthy service to others, or you may m life stupid with self-centered indulgence. Life is fore you: what will you make of it?"

### *IN TURBULENT TIMES*

Today a similar challenge confronts us, and cially the youth of our land, who live in these cha and turbulent times. Young people today find stretching before them like an open highway tha wide and alluring. On and on it runs, now win into the valley, now climbing the mountainside lost in the dim haze far distant. What does it all m How may one come to understand life's meaning?

Of pagan interpretations of life there are m They vary from the hedonistic, through the maz the meaningless, to the tragic view such as Shakesp puts upon the lips of Macbeth:

Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more.

Some years ago, in his pessimistic book *Prefac Morals,* Walter Lippmann in apt manner summe these pagan views of life in a threefold way. He st that the so-called "enlightened" man might view either as comedy, as high tragedy, or as plain farce any case, if one was "enlightened," he would m the best of it. Let us look at these three possible looks upon life.

### *LIFE A COMEDY OF ERRORS*

Many persons there are who have considered li a huge joke. "Whose god is their belly," is the wa

Paul characterized them to the church at Phi- he whole end of existence to them is to enjoy pleasure. "Eat, drink, be merry," was the slogan s day. So—"life is a comedy, sex is funny, get- ink is a big joke, and the whole end of man is the fool in life's little comedy of errors."

is to be said about such a view of life? Just it before the curtain rings down, the "comedy" turns to tragedy. To the people for whom un and sensuality is the end of existence, dis- nent, heartache and death have the last word. logan is "Eat, drink, be merry," the sequel is row we die." The dark shadow of death in- casts its gloom backward upon life. Many will e circus catastrophe one summer in New Eng- nen fire suddenly broke out in a great tent with people. That circus event may be likened able of life. The comedy was on. Clowns were their capers and people were laughing merrily. wisp of smoke, a bit of flame, and panic gave pandemonium and the comedy became a terrible Life to the seeker of pleasure is so often like

### *ARE WE INEVITABLE LOSERS?*

oday the pessimists seem to have the edge when that life is only unending tragedy, for our as been filled with suffering and desolation to ard of degree. Mr. Lippmann, however, calls tragedy" and he has reference, no doubt, to the Greek tragedies in which most if not all of the rs in the play come upon death before the nds.

there is in these Greek tragedies a stern en- quality of character and such a Stoic attitude eem to be an attempt to make the tragedy of ttle more palatable, but at best life viewed in terms is not very satisfying. The pessimism of n in the book of Ecclesiastes, that all life is nd vain, is not singable. The tragic view says hat the dice are loaded against one, and there- cannot win in the game of life under any ance, but one must keep on trying anyway. It ul advice. Human hearts being what they are, never be satisfied with a tragic and disappoint- rpretation of human experience as the final

### *LIFE AS A 'MERRY-GO-ROUND'*

is the third possibility, that of considering life e. Where this interpretation is made, one feels e petty, futile, inane, having neither rhyme nor Life is seen as a meaningless round upon round nce, all very monotonous and in the end adding othing. It may well be likened to a merry-go- While the carousal at the amusement park is among children, it is wearisome, after one most adults. One is carried round and round zzy; the tune is monotonous and finally one about two or three feet from where he got on: novement but no progress. So life considered as is a sort of merry-go-round existence: sleeping, working, eating; sleeping, working, eating; sleeping . . . the wearisome round repeats itself to no end. Such an attitude makes life "much ado about nothing," a plain farce.

Here then, according to Mr. Lippmann, one makes his choice: he can view life as comedy, as tragedy, or as a farce—and live accordingly. One takes his choice and makes the best of it.

What, we may ask, is the fallacy in the picture thus presented? Life does have comedy in it. It has tragic aspects also, And life at times does seem to be farciful in its meaninglessness. Wherein lies the difficulty? Just this fact: that we do not exhaust the possibilities of life's deeper meaning by these three limited and pagan interpretations. Life in its complexity cannot be comprehended in so simple a formula as the above views would demand. There is certainly a fourth possible interpretation of life which we feel is the Christian view: it is to take life with its comic, tragic and farciful aspects and make of it a glorious adventure, meaningful and eternally significant.

### *LIFE AS JESUS SAW IT*

For our Lord, life was neither comedy, tragedy, nor plain farce; with him it was a glorious adventure in doing the Father's will, and we hear him saying to us across the centuries, "I am come that ye might have life." Mark you, he did not say, "I am come that ye might have comedy." Jesus does not promise his followers a laughing time. Nor yet did he say, "I come that ye might have tragedy."

True, Jesus called upon his followers to take up their cross and follow him, but he also said, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it again." That is not tragedy, but triumph over tragedy. Nor did he say, "I am come that ye might have a farce for your life." Life as he lived it was zestful, worthy, thrilling, and he called men and women to live their lives in terms of spiritual adventures freighted with similar spirit and purpose.

A life of such spiritual adventure will perhaps have something of comedy in it. Elements of humor abound in life and for all such wholesome humor we thank God. Good is it for a man at times to laugh, and especially for him to be able to laugh at himself, lest he take himself too seriously. Humor saves one from the insane asylum. Nevertheless, life is not all comedy.

### *THE CHRISTIAN LIFE*

The Christian life will have also elements of tragedy, but that does not mean that life is necessarily tragic. It is always the darker shadows in a picture which make its beauty possible. In the Washington National Gallery of Art are Rembrandt's "Self-Portrait" and his painting of "Saint Paul." It is characteristic of this artist's work that around the outer portion there are very dark shadows, but the face and hands are lighted up with radiant brightness, and so the painting is a masterpiece of beauty. Take away the dark shadows and the luminous quality of the painting disappears. In making life a glorious adventure, therefore, we take the somber colors of tragedy and sorrow and, using

them aright, lo, the whole picture of life is beautiful with significance and hope.

It is true that we do not know why we have sorrows or heartaches, but we do know that we can transcend these tragic elements by the power of our Christian faith.

### *FAITH GLORIFIES AFFLICTION*

"In the darkest day of my life," said the late Henry E. Tralle, widely known church leader, "I thank God the light of heaven was in it and life was worth living." An earnest Christian lady of my acquaintance became blind some years ago and for a while she was in the slough of despond. Recently I visited her and was rejoiced to find that she was herself again—a radiant, enthusiastic Christian person. She said to me: "When this affliction came upon me, I thank God I was a Christian." She had taken tragedy and, by turning it into a triumph, made of life a glorious adventure.

Even so did the Savior. Treading the dark road to Calvary and to death, he revealed such a triumphant spirit that the cross has become our symbol of spiritual victory, and we sing with fervor:

> In the cross of Christ I glory,
> Towering o'er the wrecks of time.
> All the light of sacred story
> Gathers 'round its head sublime.

Again, although at times there may be elements in life that seem to be inane and meaningless, a life lived with spiritual adventure in the service of Christ will not be farcical. Of course life is never a sure thing. It has its risks and its hazards. It has elements of mystery. There are imponderables beyond our comprehension. Would one have these imponderables removed and all uncertainty and failure impossible? Then life would be no adventure but would be like the child's story wherein the hero and heroine always "live happily ever after."

But the Christian life is not like that. The element of risk is everywhere. The Christian does not have an easy time resolving the tragedies and the imponderables of life into that which is good. Yet we would not take the hazards from life nor resolve all of its mysteries, even if we could. Some years ago, an elderly woman watched some young people playing tennis. She was unfamiliar with the game. It was explained that when the ball hit the net it was failure. "Then why not take the net down?" she asked. Well, why not? Of course, there would be little zest in the game if we did. Take out of life all the hazards, the mysteries, the perplexing puzzles, and what have you? It is significant that Jesus did not have all the answers to life. He must needs pray in the hour of uncertainty: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

### *MAKING LIFE GLORIOUS*

And so we find life as a Christian adventure. It is not tame nor stupid, but hazardous. Bunyan was correct when he saw that the Town of Stupidity was four degrees further removed from Light than was the City of Destruction itself. To make life a stupid thing is worse than to make it evil. When the skeptics the apparent futility of life, they are demandin the adventurous elements be eliminated and made a sure thing. But the Christian sees life as ing adventure just because of the hazards and i ing to bet his life upon God and his Kingdom.

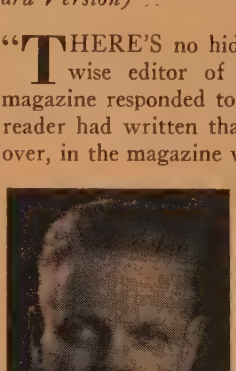
"See, I have set before thee this day, life." have learned the Master's secret of making glorious adventure, then you can take the raw rials—the humor, the tragic elements, the m the meaningless parts—and make of them all a g adventure: an adventure that is not ended e death, but which, by a high and true nobility o ice and valiant faith in God, goes on even to et So if we will sit at his feet and learn of him w be able to take the heartaches, the puzzles, th and pleasures, as well as the blank walls and t explained sorrows, and make them all a glorio venture for him and his Kingdom. But mark t *your life* is to be glorious, *you* will have to p glory into it!

# There's No Hiding Place

**By MERVIN M. DEEMS**

*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-lade I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, a will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is eas my burden is light. Matthew 11:2830. (Revised ard Version)*

"THERE'S no hiding place." In these wor wise editor of the Letters column of magazine responded to the comment of a reader reader had written that the news accounts, the over, in the magazine were so disturbing that she



dered whether she shoul ignore them and read only the theater and the cinem art. And the editor re "Let Reader Hogue gr wisdom teeth. There's n ing place."

Ominous words for our Not only can we not go again, but there's no place anywhere. One minded of the prophecy u long ago, but made true day: "Nothing is cover that will not be revealed, or hidden that will known. Whatever you have said in the dark be heard in the light, and what you have whispe private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the house

Some thirty or forty years ago, when some were growing up, there were hiding places.

### *WALLS OF NATIONALISM*

. One of these was a staunch, impregnable na-
alism. If one didn't like the way things were
ing up internationally, he could comfort himself
ı the thought that his government need not go out
ts way to interfere in matters in which it had at
only indirect concern. A world of seventy or eighty
ons is the sort of world where one may hide be-
l the walls of his nation, right *or* wrong. He may
ı help withdraw his nation from every circumstance
ch might involve it further in the complexity of
rnational relations.

ut see where we are today. This is, in a sense, an
iversary Sunday.* A year ago on V-J evening in
crowded chapel we celebrated the end of hostilities
ontritely acknowledging our guilt; by humbly ask-
God to send forth his spirit into the world "that
leaders of men everywhere, the rulers and spokes-
ı of the nations, may be instructed in the ways of
e"; and by an act of rededication we pledged our-
es "to the recovery for all men of their right to
ess of life." This, I say, was a year ago this Tues-
night.

Now we have had a year of peace—shall we call it
?—of explosions in the industrial world, fresh
erness in relations between racial and religious
ups, the throwing off of war restrictions and the
ing of a false liberty and freedom. A year in which
are at long last moving, it may be, toward definite
visions of peace.

One is reminded of Jeremiah's words:

> We looked for peace,
> but no good came;
> for an hour of healing,
> and here is dismay!
> (Jer. 14:19, Moffatt)

ong ago William Penn in his "Essay Toward the
sent and Future Peace of Europe" called attention
he three things which block peace among nations.
ese are, said Penn: "to keep; to recover; to add."
ese words, written in 1693, are startling in their
dernity in these weeks of the Paris Conference.
l all that I have said about this year of peace is
ghtened to the "*n*th" power as we complete Year
. E., the atomic era.

There's no hiding place *now*. Certainly none behind
e outmoded or impossible nationalism. That false
urity is gone. We are what Christianity has long
rted we are—world citizens, brother-men.

### *HOME AND FAMILY LIFE*

. Perhaps another hiding place which at least some
us had when we were growing up was home. There,
heard vaguely of disturbances in the outer world
there was a family defense and protection which
rded off those elements or incidents which were
n or divisive to the family as a whole. Of course
re was always the likelihood of a healthful revolt,
least in ideas, of the young against the old, but
this, ordinarily, did not disturb the cohesiveness of the family circle. The simple family life portrayed in "The Cotter's Saturday Night" would, I dare say, stand for the sort of family life which was still the goal a generation ago.

Today, there's no hiding place in the family. Here the pressures and tensions of our time invade individually and collectively the family group. And though we try to prepare our children for the realities of life, they are often away ahead of us and arrive first at the deeper implications of what is going on.

Our young people are often five to eight years ahead of where we were at their age in the knowledge of their world, in the attempts to curb prejudice, in some social expression of their ideals (such as work camps), or in their determination that there shall not be another war. This is as it should be but it also means that the modern home, far from providing a refuge from the storms of life, often serves to draw the clouds together and begin the tempest. Indeed, it was a young person who wrote the letter with which we began, and to whom the reply went: "There's no hiding place."

### *INNER RETREAT OF THE SOUL*

3. And certainly when we were young, in last resort, we might seek security and forgetfulness within the recesses of our own souls. Here was an impregnable castle, when the world was too much for us and with us. Philosophy counseled the getting to know ourselves and the quest—it was an individualized quest—for reality. Religion suggested the flight from the "alone to the Alone" or else pictured the interior castle of the soul. There was an inner retreat to which we might repair, a place to which even the most tragic experiences—that is, tragic for others—could not quite reach.

I am I—and what has happened to you is too bad, but (and this we whisper) it did not happen to me.

All this is changed. There's no hiding place. We are citizens of one world, forced into such a position by circumstances quite beyond the control of you and me. And though we have talked much about it, we are not used to the idea. No one seriously doubts it, but we are not yet adjusted to it spiritually.

Soon we are told we may speed at 1500 miles per hour twelve miles up, but we shall not go fast enough to elude the very basic and simple question, To what purpose? And a second, but more profound question, immediately follows: Does this new contrivance, this new advance in mechanics, this new discovery or invention bind us closer together—for we are of one world—or does it separate us? There is so much about our world which, left to itself, will do neither. Or, to put it another way, we have constructed the sort of world in which man can do great good, or wreak vast havoc.

It is not easy, in our kind of world, for us to take our place as world citizens. To be told that there's no hiding place is no help. To be reminded that we are of one world is to beg the question whether we are up to it spiritually and morally.

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This sermon was preached on Sunday, August 11, 1946, in Rocke-
r Memorial Chapel at the University of Chicago.

And this is all? Many of us stop here and so find no solution to this baffling life. But all of us really ask the inevitable question: How am I, an individual, related to the whole? What is my transient life at best? And is it any worth? Do I make any difference? Can I—in this brief transiency—help to bring to pass values in the lives of others? Alfred North Whitehead says: "Apart from the religious vision, human life is but a flash of occasional enjoyments lighting up a mass of pain and misery, a bagatelle of transient experience . . . "

### *STILL CHILDREN OF GOD*

But we have *had* this vision—and have it still—of God, the Father of us all, in whose Will is our peace and with whom we can bind our poor selves into a greater and more meaningful whole: of a Man, because of whose life and through whose spirit we are, at least in conscience, evermore brothers. So that when we assume his yoke and learn from him our souls find rest, "for his yoke is easy and his burden is light."

This is a faith, to be sure, as Browning says:

> You must mix some uncertainty
> With faith, if you would have faith be.

It is also fact in its working out. As Edgar S. Brightman has put it: "The simplest believer who sees life in relation to the love of God and hence sees the world as God's world has power and spiritual insight."

There's no hiding place. Nor were the words of Jesus intended so. Rather he is saying that when folk think of themselves as children of God and when they permit his creating power and grace to express themselves through their humble lives all living will be on a changed basis evermore.

Why is it we are alarmed at our world? Why is it we can never accept evil or wrong as ultimate solution? Is it not because we have had a taste of goodness and can never be content until we effect, as partial contribution of part to whole, some goodness too.

### *'EASTER DAY BREAKS!'*

Robert Browning in his "Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day" tells of his imaginary, witch-like visitation of three places of worship on Christmas Eve: the humble Zion Chapel Meeting, the elaborately impressive Midnight Mass in St. Peter's, the classroom in a German university where the Christmas story is explained logically and in scholarly fashion. These experiences bring upon the poet a tolerance of a "genial mood," and then, in a dream, Easter Day and Judgment Day and the poet choosing the world, rather than heaven at a bound; choosing the world for its art, for nature, for all that the mind can contribute—only to find at last that God is real in Christmas Eve and Easter story in the abundance of love bestowed upon humanity. So he awakes—it was a dream:

> . . . And so I live, you see,
> Go through the world, try, prove, reject,
> Prefer, still struggling to effect
> My warfare; happy that I can
> Be crossed and thwarted as a man,
> Not left in God's contempt apart,
> With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart. . . .
>
> Thank God, no paradise stands barred
> To entry, and I find it hard
> To be a Christian, as I said!
> Still every now and then my head
> Raised glad, sinks mournful—all grows drear
> Spite of the sunshine, while I fear
> And think, 'How dreadful to be grudged
> No ease henceforth, as one that's judged,
> Condemned to earth forever, shut
> From Heaven!'
> But Easter-Day breaks! But
> Christ rises! Mercy every way
> Is infinite—and who can say?

There's no hiding place. *For this*—God be prai
who hath led us to such a time that what is d
in Paris will be shouted from the housetops and w
is decided in the council chamber about Chica
schools will echo and reverberate from ward to wa

And God be praised, too, who hath given us
yoke to bear that we with him may be co-labo
in his world to our own soul's peace.

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Our life is influenced by a mysterious upw
urge in the direction of something infinitely better t
we are—a never failing summons toward an unen
increase of life. To keep from failing before
searching summons is what makes a man sincere,
gives him self-respect and peace of mind and the po
of influence unlike anything else in the world. W
ever we call that upward urge—conscience, sens
honor, a "potent, felt, interior command"—or whe
we call it the voice of God, it is the prime facto
making life sincere. . . . We are not simply seel
God but are being sought by him.

It was the experience of mystery—even if mi
with fear—that engendered religion. A knowledg
the existence of something we cannot penetrate,
perceptions of the profoundest reason and the r
radiant beauty, which our minds seem to reach onl
their most elementary forms—it is this attitude
this emotion that constitute the truly religious attit

Albert Einstei

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If now America were to return to the Bible—
source book of American freedom—we would no n
find a blueprint for the tasks before us than our forb
did. But we might find, as they did, those basic
changeless values to which the plans we make n
conform. And beyond that, a return to the Bible m
revive in us, as it released in them, a quality of f
and vision to match the opportunities that confront

Stanley High

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Machinery can never insure world peace. I
the kind of people who are behind the machine
counts, And in determining the kind of people
operate the machinery the family unit is of pr
importance.

Lester A. Kirkendall

# ıe Lure of thePerfect

**By JAMES BLAIR MILLER**

*ye therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is t. Matthew 5:48.*

ME MONTHS ago Dr. Louis E. Bisch wrote n article for the popular magazine *Your Life* the disturbing title "Stop Trying to be Perfect." ontent of the article must have provided great for discouraged idealists, with such words as these: "Cultivate a little of the 'don't care' habit: don't worry about what people may think; keep a few faults. Above all, stop trying to be perfect." These comforting words came out of a magazine whose subtitle or slogan is "a popular guide to desirable living."

There is a great appeal in such a theme. It is most helpful to one's daily compromise with ideals to have someone keep telling us that we might s well keep a few well chosen faults. The easiest in the world to do is to tell ourselves over and gain that after all we cannot or should not expect perfect. All this is certainly a popular guide to ble living.

### *A TRUE GUIDE TO LIVING*

t when we stand in a Christian tradition and come the sway of the New Testament standard for we find ourselves confronted with something than a mere popular guide for desirable living. The New Testament itself presents a *true* guide to *worthwhile* living. Its exhortation stands in direct opposition to any compromising of the ideals of life. Instead of saying "Stop trying to be perfect," the New Testament records in the Gospel of Matthew give us these words of Jesus: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

These words of Jesus have through the centuries set Christian minds and hearts on a high quest. The common mind, the average judgment of the world, has usually looked at the Sermon on the Mount with a casual if not indifferent glance, and has dismissed it as impracticable, perfectionary, idyllic and even impossible. Such human criticism of the basic teachings given in the Sermon on the Mount does not indicate that Christianity is not true, but simply that it is too perfectionary to be practical for everyday life.

### *THE IDEALISM OF JESUS*

That the Sermon on the Mount is high idealism is not to be denied. It lays the ax to all sham, all hypocrisy. It calls for a righteousness which exceeds all the normal requirements of good living. It defines the deeper sinfulness of life in terms not only of deeds but also of motives. It asks men to walk the second mile, to love their enemies, to refrain from judgment, to have no anxiety for tomorrow. And it gives a final touch of real authority in its conclusion that anyone who fails to build life upon these principles is doomed for destruction, like a house built on the sands.

Such high idealism as that stands as the great attraction to the Christian spirit. Branded as impracticable by the human mind, it is the lure of this perfect standard for life that gives Christianity its deepest characteristic. The Christian insists that the fault does not lie with the high ideals of Christianity, but with the lack

# A Pastoral Prayer

**By ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE**

TERNAL GOD, our heavenly Father, from whom our spirits come and to whom they shall ı, by the might of Thy Spirit lift us to Thy ıce, that we may obtain mercy and find grace p us in time of need.

e are weak mortal men, immersed in this world's s, exposed to temptation, liable to suffering, ac- ted with grief. Visit, we beseech Thee, this ring of Thy people, and pour into us such love d Thee that we may obtain Thy promises, which ss all our dreams of good.

God of grace, who forgiveth all our iniquities ıealeth all our diseases, help us to repent of our ınd to look to Thee for cleansing and healing. ifully deliver us from the lusts of the flesh and ıemies of the spirit, from all that bruises us and s us miserable and afraid. Fill us with Thy Spirit, that we may become better men and that, ng ourselves unto Thee, our souls and bodies as a living sacrifice, we may be used of Thee to help one another and to heal the hurt of the world.

O God of all comfort, whose presence brings peace to those who mourn, look with Thy compassion upon all who are in trouble, sorrow or danger, that, knowing that Thou art with them, they may be delivered from fear and from despair; and that, putting their trust in Thee, they may be defended in all trials and upheld in all conditions.

O God of love, in whose sight no sparrow is forgotten, we pray for those who are bound to us by ties of kindred and affection, and most especially for those now parted from us. Let the angel of Thy presence uphold them.

O Thou who art Ruler of the world and the Lord of history, let Thy Kingdom more fully come on earth. Bring war to an end throughout all the world, and establish justice and peace among men; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

of will on the part of those who seek to follow Christ. The condemnation is not upon Christian principles as too idealistic, but upon ourselves as too human. The reluctant expression of the early centuries of the church gives us a clue: "Thou, O Galilean, art too great for our small hearts." Christ lures us to the perfect, but our hearts sometimes are too small to follow.

### *THE LURE OF THE IDEAL*

The Christian exhortation, "Be ye therefore perfect," must be commended as a real source of meaning, of zeal, of conscience for life. Life needs such a lure of the perfect in order to lift it up higher and higher.

These high ideals of the Sermon on the Mount call forth the deepest resources that lie latent in human life. The perfect ideals of Christ lure us to an ever higher pattern of human living. We develop day by day a will to serve and live the ideals which Christ has set before us; we discover a challenge which itself is a source of incentive and power.

The perfection toward which Christ lures us, furthermore, develops within our mind and heart a conscience which deepens as life grows. A man who is following no ideal, who has not accepted any standard for his life, has not a definite way of criticizing himself. Having no aim toward which he strives, he is not ashamed when he fails to reach any goals. One thing of great importance which the Christian lure of the perfect does for us is that it creates a healthy dissatisfaction with ourselves, which is a spur to greater zeal in pursuing our ideals. We come to a state of mind much like a character in one of James Barrie's plays: "The trouble is not in our stars, but in *ourselves.*"

The Christian exhortation, "Be ye therefore perfect," lures men also because it is a more than human call. The high standard which is set before us in the Sermon on the Mount may seem beyond us, but one cannot escape the note of authority with which the words of Jesus are invested. One cannot easily dismiss the words of Christ without running against all the authority which is behind them. According to the parable of Jesus, the world would be divided between the wise generations which seriously try to obey his words and the foolish generations which pass them by in indifference. "These words of a Nazareth Carpenter," says Dr. Buttrick, "are to be absolute law, a touchstone by which men and nations rise and fall."

### *LAW THAT IS ABSOLUTE*

Whence came such authority? The ultimate of all authority rests with the God who is above all and in all. These high ideals of Christ's great sermon come into life with a note of seriousness when we are caught up in the realization that they are a part of a divine revelation. The human soul disobeys a divine lure when it ignores the lure of the perfect.

When, in human reasoning, we talk about accepting a lesser standard for life on the ground that Christ in this great sermon goes beyond the realm of realism, have we considered the awkward position in which that places the Christian mind? How can Christians measure life by any other standard except the highest that has been revealed to us in Christ? How can we esc the condemnation of foolishness if we let go the hig revelation which has come to history?

### *'AS YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN'*

The answer is found partially in the discovery this lure of the perfect rests in the ultimate extr upon some experience of the God who revealed him in Christ. Apart from a vision of God there is no of the perfect at all. "As your Father in heave perfect" is a vital part of the lure.

Christianity to many of its professors has redu itself to mere conformity to a code. Seen from suc literal, legalistic point of view, it is little wonder the high ideals to which Christ calls us are looked u with reservation. Life must be focused upon God be any high standard of conduct takes on real mea

# False Fronts

**A SERMON FOR CHILDREN**

**By RALPH C. LANKLER**

THERE is an interesting store on the main st of the town where I live. This store has a p liar front. It looks as if it were a two-story build but it is, in reality, only a one-story building. It what is known as a false front.

When you look at this building you see a first f where there is a grocery store with two large windo and above these on the supposedly second floor, small windows. When you walk around to the of the building and look behind the four small dows expecting to find a second story, you are prised to see that there is none, just an open sp

There are many people in life like that build They appear to have a second story; they appea be more or better than they are; they put on a sh or a false front; but when you get around beh them you discover that there is little or nothing.

Children call the actions of such people by wo like "bluffing," "posing," or "make-believe." For stance, a boy may strut around as if he can beat ev one at every game. He talks, but doesn't play a g game of baseball, cops and robbers, and swimm Or there may be a girl who tries to appear wi smarter and brighter than her friends, as if she k all of the answers. Such boys and girls are not clever as they try to make others think they are, those who know them easily see through their f fronts.

Jesus spoke about those who tried to appear be than they actually were. They posed as being go helpful and kind that they might be seen and prai He called them hypocrites and said that they w wolves in sheep's clothing. They looked very g and had long faces about it, but such a pious attit was only a false front, because in their minds t did not know God and in their hearts they did love people.

gency. One can understand why men question sibility of living the code of Christ when they o experience of the God through whom the code ven.

lure of the perfect rests ultimately upon the of God. That vision of God, as K. E. Kirk has is the whole aim and purpose of life." The vision l is primary, the lure of the perfect is secondary. of the ideals of Christ's great sermon have their eaning, or take on any urgency, unless they are n the context of the God who revealed himself gh his Son.

ye therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father perfect"—here are words which present a divine, call which lures the Christian on toward the ideals which Christ has brought into life. Few ttain perfection, but the compulsion to strive is here.

### *HOW FAR UP, THE QUESTION*

n Morrow Lindberg in her short novel *The Steep* tells of a young British flier and his wife who a dangerous one-day trip from London to Rome, the high Alps. During the course of their flight ncountered a heavy fog, which forced them to higher and higher, until finally they had lost course. They were not sure that they had com- crossed the high terrains of the Alps, and were l lest when they sought to come down through ouds they might strike a high peak. The young courageous and contemplative, kept asking her- How far is it down to some mountain peak on we will crash and end our lives? That question teemed trivial, and she found herself thinking profoundly: what really mattered was not how own it was to earth, but how far up they had ed. She quickly applied this thought to their lives: ould not really measure life by the distance down lowest level, but only by the distance up to its . At once everything in her happy life began to n new meaning. She thought of her happy mar- ife, of her little son back in England, of the ement of life which she had known. She unhesi- ly and calmly concluded that even if life were l at that moment, she was grateful for what it rought her. Life itself seemed to her to be a gift than a possession, a gift worthy of presentation Giver of all life. Her thoughts went to that hymn ressive of the sacrifice of the Christians of every

They climbed the steep ascent of heav'n
Through peril, toil, and pain;
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train.

e from a true Christian standpoint is a steep , a lure of the perfect and the ideal. It is to be ired by the distance up, and to persist on an ever ling road toward great ideals. To any who know e deep experience of faith in God such great ideal- eems folly and fantasy, but to the Christian it is ly answer life can give to the Most High.

# The Church and Today

**By HAROLD L. BOWMAN**

WE CAN hardly exaggerate the necessity of a strong Christian church in the present world. This means not an authoritarian church which tries to short-circuit the spirit of free inquiry. It does not mean a church which specializes in defending a pre-scientific theology. It does not mean a church which is so deeply intrenched in its vested interests that it lends its sanction to the status quo. But it does mean a church that has caught and embodied the spirit of Jesus; a church that dares to proclaim and to live by a higher righteousness and a more inclusive love than prevail in contemporary society; a church which in word and deed demonstrates the possibility of the Kingdom of God and of the doing of God's will in a world that has almost despaired of that Kingdom.

Such a church and such Christians as that our world needs—oh, so desperately!

Disillusionment has gripped our postwar world. Peace has not yet been achieved. The four freedoms are almost forgotten in the struggle for power. Plans for world order are paralyzed by fear and suspicion. The specter of atomic destruction overshadows humanity.

Men and nations need a prophetic voice that recalls them to justice and mercy, to hope and to faith. Precious becomes every influence that will make men less selfish and more brotherly, less suspicious and more tolerant, less greedy and more honest, less timid and more courageous, less the victim of circumstance and more the responsible, valiant children of God.

To this tremendous task our bewildered world challenges the church. To this destiny God is summoning his church. As in the old tradition there rose from the flames a phoenix, a bird rejuvenated in power and gorgeous in plumage, so from the flames of our costly freedom there ought to rise a glorious Christian spirit which will fit our lives and our church to the opportunity of our day.

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FRICTION between people slows up more work than friction in machines. GABRIEL HEATTER.

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IN THE LIGHT of failure by science, by economic prowess, and by ingenuity, it is now plain that we live in a good day; a day in which the road to God is wide open as it has never been before. It is a good day in which to be alive. GEORGE L. PARKER.

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## BEST SERMONS, 1947

G. Paul Butler, editor of the Best Sermons series, is in search of outstanding sermons for the 1947 edition, now in preparation. A total of 5,674 sermons were submitted for the 1946 edition, Dr. Butler reports; from these, 52 were selected for inclusion in last year's book. He would like the cooperation of *Pulpit* readers as he makes his selections for the current volume. Sermon manuscripts should be mailed to Dr. Butler at 431 Riverside Drive, New York 25, N. Y.

# The Appeal of the Christian Ministry

By HARRY L. ICE

YOUNG MEN of independent means were advised by the late William Howard Taft to go into the Christian ministry as the field of greatest opportunity for service. A wise man was Judge Taft. The Christian ministry does offer a great opportunity to young men, and whoever desires that office desires a "good thing," but he must carry a giant's load in the world of men. To lead people in days like these—and that is the minister's job—is a herculean task. To be a spiritual leader when *things* are in the saddle requires great faith and courage. The Christian ministry is no "paradise for loafers." The price of success in the ministry is unremitting labor—just as in any other calling. Genius in the ministry analyzes itself out about the same as genius does anywhere else—about ninety per cent hard work. Perhaps the other ten per cent is gumption.

### ● *'Great Lights' and 'Tallow-Dips'*

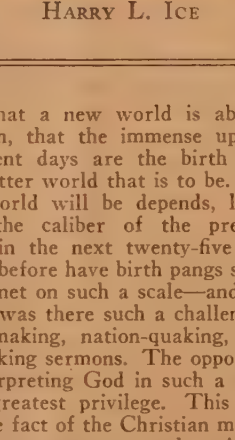
Some critic, writing in the *British Weekly*, has said: "The great pulpit-thrones are not now occupied as they used to be." Perhaps the critic forgets that the church never had many great preachers at one time. In choosing the ministry as a calling one should remember that many preachers, not known very far beyond their parishes, are doing magnificent and successful work. Not many men can be stand-out preachers who draw great crowds—men who speak to the nation. While we thank God for the "Great Lights," let us also be grateful for "tallow-dips"! I wish to lay it down as a general proposition that any healthy Christian person of consecration and determination—backed by adequate preparation—can fill a place of great need in the Christian ministry.

The primary appeal of the ministry is that it offers one the chance to be something—that fact belongs in the category of "first things." Woodrow Wilson spoke some words every minister should hide in his heart when he said: "When I hear some of the things which young men say to me by way of putting the arguments to themselves for going into the ministry, I think they are talking of another profession. Their motive is to *do* something, when it should be to *be* something."

There are five specific challenges for the ministry of today—and tomorrow—for the preacher must be a myriad-minded man.

### ● *Heralds of God's Dream for the World*

First, the challenge to the world his vision of God. This motive is basic in all the great moods and movements of mankind. All great music, art, eloquence, prophecy, literature, freedom, government, statesmanship—all are based, in the last analysis, upon man's growing vision of God, and his high resolve to tell that vision in terms of a better civilization. Some of us believe that a new world is about to be born, that the immense upheaval of recent days are the birth throes of a better world that is to be. What that world will be depends, largely, upon the caliber of the preaching heard in the next twenty-five years. Never before have birth pangs smitten the planet on such a scale—and never before was there such a challenge for epoch-making, nation-quaking, political-shaking sermons. The opportunity of interpreting God in such a time is life's greatest privilege. This is the sublime fact of the Christian ministry.



HARRY L. ICE

Let any young man who wishes to invest his life where it will count most consider this truth: Our Christianity (God) is not one that can be understood by philosophers alone; nor does it appeal to any particular class alone—it is for all as the sun is for all. God is to the soul what space is to the builder. The preacher for this age must interpret God to builders of the better world that is to be. W would not be a preacher in a day this?

### ● *Interpreter the Script*

Second: Besides the right to pr esy, there is the duty to interpr rightly—the Scripture. The Bib still our "deathless Book." A Ga poll taken some time ago showed interest in the Bible continues to g —that six out of every ten Ameri sixty-two per cent, take time to the Bible. No other book is rea so many people. Surely the prea has a challenge here to help t readers to a clearer understan of the Bible. The most effe preachers—those who build most manently for tomorrow—are ex tory preachers.

The preacher has a great ch here. The public mind is fed u artificial and fantastic interpretat It is eager for truth with hu values. Case studies, human ex ences—these are absorbed as parched earth drinks up life-g rain. This is precisely what our is and woe to the man who misi prets it to his people. The giants occupy pulpit-thrones, above refe to, are not elocutionists, reviewer books, nor proclaimers of some social or political scheme—but who expound the Word of God; who plumb its depths and make found things simple. To be sure, man who so interprets the Script must himself be saturated with t

### ● *A Shepher So*

Third: Then the minister mus a true shepherd of souls. Someone rightly called preachers "human moral officers." Their business tone up the human spirit, to qui flagging courage—to keep folks "a in the task of fine living. There many impulses of youth that are l to turn wayward and miss the m these must be guided to good ends to a satisfying outcome.

Then, too, there are the aged who need comfort and reassura Friends of other days have gon and left them; enthusiasm, hope zest for life are waning. The min can help age be glorious, not an climax.

Moreover, the heavy-laden be heartened. Discouragements troubles must be kept under w

urage of optimism and faith
:he burden bearers to acquit
lves like men. In short, the
r must be a master of human-
owing all that is in men and
g out always the best.

### ● *Executive and Leader of Activities*

rth: As if this were not enough,
nister is head of an institution
nany functions—all of which
be brought to bear upon the
ob of making the man on the
mindful that he is the son of
Obviously, no one man can per-
serve more than a few score,
e church machinery should be
o extend that service to hun-
and thousands. So the minister
e an executive. He must enlist
ople in ministering.
dentally, wise laymen—seeing
inister swamped with executive
-will get under the load and re-
im, thus emulating the laymen
New Testament church who
d the apostles from serving
There are many details in the
school department, the financial
m, the missionary and benevo-
ork, the church service with all
ases—worship, teaching, music
ellowship; all these need the
ng hand of the executive. And
e laymen can afford such help
pastor.
n one of those who believe that
ese" may be done skillfully and
e church may fail. In other
they are only parts of a great
m. It is my conviction that al-
here should be a sermon of such
h and power as to make both
nd message carry always the
of eternity with them—or the
thing is a failure.

### ● *A Citizen of the World*

fifth and final challenge of the
y is to become a builder of
righteousness and a seer of
wide conditions. In other
the minister must carry his
nity and his world in his heart.
eacher is a citizen of the world.
sense the world is his parish.
g that is human is foreign to
Ours is a conquering Christ.
odern development in the min-
is more significant than the
nical note. The most intelligent
the world today is the recog-
that humanity is one family.
ut the church—and the church
ossible without the ministry,
e God created the ministry
d the ministry made the church
hese days of organized crime,
ould turn the world back to
rk ages and worse in one gener-
f unchecked, there is little hope
world.

Therefore, the ministry is a profession of the first magnitude. It is the highest calling. When one enters the ministry he sets out on a great quest that dims the exploits of Jason and his Argonauts. He is admitted to the mystic circle with the Master. Like the youthful Isaiah, who heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? and who will go for us?" he replies: "Here am I, Lord; send me." The minister of today accepts the challenge with the greatest appeal and engages in a work that carries with it life's greatest joy.

The Christian minister deals in the stuff of which characters, lives and souls are made—not merely for today and tomorrow but for eternity. He faces stern demands, but greater satisfactions—the satisfactions that attend a life that is lovingly, unselfishly, sacrificially and worthily lived. Something more—in the distance the voice of One who spake as never man spake, saying, "Well done."

## Ready-Made Counseling Opportunities

**By RALPH GRIESER**

IT IS high time that the counseling opportunities of the pastor are being lifted up and professionalized, but like all emphases this new discipline is open to danger. As soon as we begin to bring pastoral service under definite techniques, the temptation comes to think in terms of a room so many feet long with a secretary in the adjoining office at specific hours announced in advance, while in practice many of our counseling opportunities occur on the field in calling in the homes and in incidental associations with our people. This is particularly true in the town and country church where most of the openings come outside the pastor's counseling room. Let me illustrate.

One of our pastors, wishing to greet a young parishioner who was then at home from the army, stopped at the village office of the lad's father. The elder is the editor of this rural community's weekly newspaper. As can happen under the informal customs of a small community, the pastor walked directly into the editor's office, inquired about the lad, and accepted the editor-father's offer to use the office telephone to call the boy. Of course the party-line to the boy's home was busy!

In the interval a counseling opportunity began to open. The father mentioned the family's fear that this boy would hastily marry a certain girl before he returned for another year in the armed service. Expecting him to go to college when he was discharged, they wanted him to postpone marriage to a girl who was not interested in furthering her formal education beyond high school.

While the telephone call with the son was being completed, the editor's wife came into the office. The editor whispered that he had shared their concern for their offspring. When the pastor put up the telephone receiver, he stood in the middle of a consulting room. It was time to sit on the editor's desk, try his skill at directed questioning, and command a battery of techniques in helping these troubled parents.

The minister in town and country needs to remember that with the getting of skills the place of his counseling room moves about as he walks the village streets, mingles in the crowd at public farm auctions, when he gets his car gassed, while buying groceries—in fact, he is counselor rain or shine whenever he appears alone outside the parsonage and the church building! He needs his skills at his finger tips both as he calls from home to home and as he goes about town and country places.

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There is no eloquence equal to that of sincerity.

It is a poor sermon which has no spirit of desperation in it.

The world is in need of more men who can neither be frightened nor bought.

The world always needs priests, but there was never a time when it needed more a host of courageous prophets.

ROY L. SMITH.


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**The Pulpit**

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# • WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

BORN *in Scotland, Rev.* ROBERT J. MCCRACKEN received his later education at Glasgow University (M.A. 1925, B.D. 1928). He ministered at Marshall Street Baptist Church, Edinburgh, and at Dennistoun Baptist, Glasgow, and in 1933, while he served the latter church, he became lecturer in systematic theology in the Baptist Theological College of Scotland. Following five years of this double responsibility he spent a year in special study at Cambridge University. In 1938 Dr. McCracken came to America and became associate professor of Christian theology and philosophy of religion at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario. On October 2, 1946, he was installed as minister of the Riverside Church, New York city.

*Since 1939 Rev.* ALEXANDER E. SHARP *has been* executive secretary of the Synod of Indiana of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. He has held pastorates at Westhope, N. D., Madison, Wis. (university pastor), and Columbus, Ind. In 1942-43 he was national executive director of the Presbyterian Wartime Service Commission. He is a graduate of McCormick Theological Seminary.

*During his long preaching career Rev.* WILLIAM H. HUDNUT, SR., ministered at First Presbyterian Church, Port Jervis, N. Y., 1890-94; at Grace Presbyterian, Brooklyn, N. Y., 1894-99; and at First Presbyterian, Youngstown, O., 1899-1937. Since his retirement he has lived at Northampton, Mass. He is the father of Rev. Herbert B. Hudnut of Detroit and Rev. William H. Hudnut, Jr., of Rochester, N. Y. The sermon in this issue was preached on the occasion of William H., Jr.'s installation as minister of the Third Presbyterian Church in Rochester.

*Rev.* E. CROSSLEY HUNTER *has been minister of* Knox Church, Winnipeg, Canada, since the United Church was organized. Previous to that time he minister of the Methodist Church, holding pastora Toronto and Hamilton, Ontario. He graduated i from Toronto University and in theology from Emm College, Toronto.

*Rev.* EDWARD O. CLARK *has since 1924 beer* ister of the Chevy Chase Baptist Church in Washi D. C. He is a graduate of Bucknell University, Co Rochester Divinity School and Union Theological inary.

*Since 1943 Dr.* MERVIN M. DEEMS *has beer* fessor of the history of early Christianity and mi at Chicago Theological Seminary. In earlier yea taught at William Jewell College, Carleton Colleg Bangor Theological Seminary. For several years h a pastor and chaplain, having been ordained into the tist ministry and later transferring to the Congrega fellowship. He received his A.B. at Johns Hopkin Th.M. at Southern Baptist Seminary, and his Ph. the University of Chicago.

*Rev.* JAMES BLAIR MILLER *is minister of Be* Memorial Church, serving students in Bethany Co Bethany, W. Va. He also instructs in religious educ at the college. He was graduated at Bethany Colleg has his B.D. degree from Yale Divinity School.

*Rev.* ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE *is minister of* Methodist Church, Evanston, Ill.

*Dr.* HARRY L. ICE *is director of ministerial* ing at Bethany College, Bethany, W. Va.

*Rev.* RALPH GRIESER *is minister of the Met* Church, Polo, Ill.

*Rev.* R. C. LANKLER *is minister of the First* byterian Church, Cortland, N. Y.

*Rev.* HAROLD L. BOWMAN *is minister of the* Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Ill.

# TITLES AND TEXTS — What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

A. P. BURTON, Lefferte Park Baptist, Brooklyn, N. Y. "Members of the Beloved Community." Rom. 12:4-5—"For as we have many members in one body . . . So we, being many, are one body in Christ."

W. M. IRWIN, First Presbyterian, San Diego, Cal. "Facing the Fact of Christ." John 12:21—"Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

H. J. HERBER, Evangelical and Reformed, Lebanon, Pa. "The Christian I Would Like to Be." Phil. 3:13-14—"This one thing I do, forgetting . . . I press to the mark unto the prize of the high calling of G Christ Jesus."

M. R. GAULKE, First Church of God, Chicago. "V Freedom Is Safe." 1 Pet. 2:16—"Live as free yet without using freedom as a pretext for evil live as servants of God." (R. S. V.)

M. P. GERMAN, Bethany Baptist, Washington, D "Bargain Counter Religion." Gen. 28:20—"If will be with me on this journey, give me food t and clothes to wear so that I return to my fat house safe and sound—then shall he be my God."

GEORGE B. GENSEMER, Presbyterian, Newport, Pa. Christian in His Right Mind." 1 Cor. 2:16b—we have the mind of Christ."

EDGAR F. DRUMEL, First Baptist, Springfield, "Higher Costs." Matt. 10:38—"And he that doth take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of

FRANK L. BROWN, First Methodist, Ada, Ohio. "Pre Tense Deity." John 8:58—"Jesus said, Before A ham was, I am."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

*Title of sermon*

*Text used (write out the text)*

*Name of minister*

*Name of church*

*Address*

# The Editor's Page

## he Event of the Month

V, if any, events in the life of the churches pass in importance the biennial meeting of the leral Council of Churches. This year the three delegates, representing twenty-four denomina- athered in Seattle. The sessions were notable in many respects. In the extra-ecclesiastical field in which the council operates on behalf of the it was evident that a common purpose is be- more firm to bring the united impact of Prot- n to bear, as well as a federal agency can, upon t problems in our national life and throughout ld. An important new step was taken, however, er area, looking toward the closer union of the s themselves. The council received overtures vo of its constituent denominations—the Con- nal Christian and the Disciples of Christ— t to invite all the denominations which recognize ther's ministries and sacraments to send rep- ives to a conference whose purpose would be re the possibility of closer union. To this re- e council acceded. No doubt the invitation will to all the member denominations, leaving each le for itself whether to participate. I regret renewed application of the Universalist Church ncil membership was not accepted. However, a nce was provided for between representatives council and of the Universalists at which I be- e doctrinal obstacles will be removed.

**ted Protestantism Biennial Session**

## The Book of the Month

IAN ETHICS AND SOCIAL POLICY. *By John C. ett. Scribners, $2.00.*

PERPLEXITY of the Christian conscience is quite so acute today as that which arises in the attempt to apply the ethical principles of the an faith to the problems of the social order. And not found in the multitude of books that have ritten on this subject one that more simply and ghtly deals with this perplexity than Dr. Ben- new book. The responsibility of the individual an and the Christian church in the field of pub- irs is now generally recognized. How this re- ility is to be exercised in concrete situations is ple matter. The author sees the Christian, as ine saw him, as a citizen of two communities— of the world and the city of God. To live con- y in both is the problem. Dr. Bennett believes solution is possible and he expounds it with ting insight, though he concedes that it is not easy to follow. His analysis and criticism of the various "strategies" that have been adopted to resolve the problem is illuminating and invaluable. His own solution is found partly in the sphere of the Christian's inner life and partly in the objective scene. He states and expounds the spiritual attitude which must control every Christian decision and affirms several guiding principles (so-called "middle axioms") by which the Christian conscience may make positive, though not absolute, choices in the complex (and often tragic) situations which the Christian confronts. I fear that the limitation of space leaves my comment unclear, but I assure the reader that Dr. Bennett's treatment is marked by the utmost clarity.

## A Thought for the Month

OF ALL the names by which Christians are known, I think Jesus would prefer that we be called Friends—friends of Jesus himself. "Followers" is good, but it suggests imitation and conformity. "Servants" is good, but Jesus did not like its implication and he gave to the term "Master" a new meaning which made "servant" and "master" identical. "Disciples" is good, but it suggests immaturity. Upon the name "Friends" Jesus set his own explicit approval. "Henceforth I call you not servants," he said, "but I call you friends." The point of his preference was that a servant does not know what his master is about, but a friend shares in the purposes, plans and resources of his friend. The servant takes orders without knowing what the orders mean. But I have taken you into my confidence, says Jesus; there are no secrets between us; all things that the Father has told me I have told you. There is a true sense in which Jesus exercises authority, but his deepest appeal to men is not in terms of his authority, but of their dignity and responsibility. You are my spiritual partners, he says. With all their devotion to Christ, the early Christians were never servile. Christianity, in this respect at least, was no slave-ethic. Christians boldly felt a kind of companionship with Christ which a slave could not think of claiming. Their idea of "obedience" to him whom they loved to call Lord was transformed by a mutuality of purpose and outlook between themselves and him which only friend could claim with friend. Had Paul been talking to slaves, he never would have said, Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus!

**Friends of The Master**

Charles Clayton Morrison

# How can we make the *WORLD WE WANT?*

**We must discover again life's real values. We must negate materialistic living, and find that the age-old virtues of goodness and truth and beauty are the most vitally important. A deep reawakening of religious feeling is necessary for the molding of a truly Christian life. There must be a revival of genuine faith in teaching, preaching, and being. The careful logic and shrewd penetration of these books are guides back to a more spiritual, selfless world, which is the one man's heart truly seeks.**

## *Where The NEW WORLD Begins*

JAMES REID

**The meaning of the words tumult, security, prayer, protection, and harmony are well known to the author. He was one of the home front heroes of the last war, having been bombed out of his parish on the channel coast of England. In this thoughtful book he points out that those words must have meaning for all men and women if a promising new world is to exist. In fifty-four interpretations he proclaims the ideals, the motives, and the desires that are essential to both personal and world renewal. It is truly a guide to inspirational living.**

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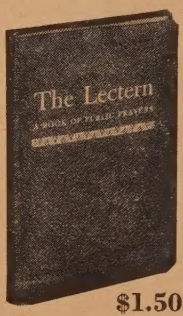


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